

Research on the Influence of Visual Arts on Self-identity and Self-confidence Construction of Adolescent Girls

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Abstract: *The form and content of visual arts endow them with significant psychological value. Especially in the education of self-identity and self-confidence construction for adolescent girls, the appreciation of human body paintings can help them build confidence in their bodies. The emotional analysis of famous works can shape a healthy view of love among students, understanding the life experiences of artists can inspire resilience in adolescent girls, and teaching art colors can improve their self-cognition system. To achieve these functions, it is necessary to enhance the characteristics of different art elements, change the forms of visual art activities according to individual personalities, and organically integrate artistic behaviors with the environment.*

Keywords: *visual arts; adolescent girls; self-identity and self-confidence; influence; strategies*

1. Introduction

Visual art is a form of modeling art that uses material materials to shape visual images that can be seen by people, including painting, sculpture, film, crafts, and more. At the same time, it is also a language, a carrier of tangible and intangible dialogue between the creator and the audience; this language is composed of basic visual elements and design principles. Because the images, lines, colors, etc., that constitute the visual language have psychological hints and guiding roles, visual arts have psychological educational value. This paper starts from the analysis of the psychological value of visual arts, discusses the impact of visual arts on the self-identity and self-confidence construction of adolescent girls, and proposes feasible suggestions for playing the educational role of this art form.

2. The Psychological Value of Visual Arts

2.1. *The Narrative Techniques of Visual Arts Conform to the Logic of Value Education*

Visual arts are based on several images telling stories, characterized by imagery, metaphor, and symbolism. This helps to attract individuals' visual attention, making abstract and implicit value content more vivid in the process. Therefore, it also fits the basic logic of value education. For example, to let individuals understand the highest ideals and ultimate goals of the Communist Party of China and generate correct political values, video materials of the founding ceremony of the People's Republic of China can be used. These visual art images allow individuals to "personally" experience the exciting moment of the founding of New China and answer why it is necessary to resolutely support the leadership of the Communist Party of China.

2.2. *The Basic Laws of Visual Arts Align with the Process of Individual Psychological Growth*

Individual psychological growth is a process from concrete to abstract, from general to holistic. The creation and presentation laws of visual arts also conform to this process. They can awaken individual attention, integrate into individual psychology, and enhance individual cognitive thoughts, thereby achieving the generation of cultural confidence, value recognition, and self-confidence construction. For example, Hegel once said that color is an idea, like words, capable of conveying information. Therefore, using highly representative colors, graphics, or visual symbols can not only stimulate individuals' instinctive visual memory but also guide them to explore the deeper content behind the symbols, make correct interpretations, and achieve the transition from the concrete to the abstract. This follows the

characteristics of individual psychological growth to explore the connotation of things.

3. The Influence of Visual Arts on the Self-identity and Self-confidence Construction of Adolescent Girls

3.1. Appreciating Human Body Paintings Helps Build Students' Body Confidence

Since visual arts have significant psychological value, they are naturally applied to many aspects of adolescent education and teaching. Especially for adolescent girls, this art plays a role in helping students correctly understand themselves and construct self-identity and self-confidence from different dimensions.

Firstly, the rapid hormonal changes in adolescent students lead to girls developing more beautiful body curves and facing the troubles of menstruation. At this time, they are prone to body insecurity due to a lack of understanding of their bodies or embarrassment about physiological issues, leading to psychological insecurity. However, the appreciation of painting art, especially human body paintings in visual arts, helps girls correctly recognize their body changes, understand that these changes are something everyone experiences and are beautiful. There is no need to be shy, hunchbacked, or secretive; instead, they should stand tall and be naturally confident.

For example, using Michelangelo's "The Creation of Adam" and Botticelli's "The Birth of Venus" to conduct human body painting appreciation classes, teachers can focus on letting students compare the paintings, pay attention to body differences, and ask questions based on their interests. This makes students realize that while personal body secrets need respect, body topics based on scientific knowledge of both sexes can be openly discussed. Teachers set an example, eliminating the girls' shy and timid psychological emotions. Then, teachers can let students observe the differences in male and female body structures and lines, such as the muscular and powerful lines of boys and the more delicate lines of girls with obvious curves. These body differences are related to adolescent development and are normal phenomena. But since everyone's hormone levels are different, girls may also have larger physiques and more pronounced abdominal and upper arm lines. Under the guidance of teachers, students can learn to analyze paintings from the perspective of body beauty, which is a natural appreciation of the beauty of human forms. Teachers then draw students' attention back to the works, observing Adam and Venus's postures, expressions, and body movements, and introducing the background of the works' creation, helping students understand both the explicit and implicit beauty of the works. As teaching progresses, girls will no longer avoid looking at the works, and will be more open and cheerful when discussing adolescent body changes[1].

3.2. Emotional Analysis of Famous Works Helps Shape Students' Healthy Views on Love

Human primitive sexual behavior is driven by physiological needs and natural instincts. During adolescence, the body becomes more mature, estrogen becomes more pronounced, and girls naturally develop psychological or physiological impulses related to sex. The most direct manifestation is the yearning for adolescent love. However, if they cannot correctly view the emotions between boys and girls at this time, they are prone to rebellious psychology or the influence of love fantasies on their studies. At this time, teachers can conduct love psychological education based on the love stories in famous works, helping adolescent girls correctly view love and form healthy emotional views.

For example, displaying the oil painting works of "Romeo and Juliet" and telling the love story that happened to Romeo and Juliet in a storytelling manner, especially the creation background of the story, can stimulate students' enthusiasm for discussing interesting topics. Then, freeze the teaching at the moment of the main characters' passionate farewell kiss in the painting, and ask questions about their views on Romeo and Juliet's story. What do they think love should be like? This allows students to see different individuals' perceptions of love in free discussions. Teachers' timely evaluations can help students establish correct sexual morality views and understand the relationship between family, social relations, and love. Then, displaying works such as "Marriage for Status" and "Marriage for Money," guides students to think about the love and marriage views behind these works. By combining the stories in the paintings, students are informed that seemingly great love that destroys families is immoral. During the period when students both long for love and are confused about it, clear behavioral boundaries of what is acceptable and what is not are established[2].

3.3. The Life Experiences of Artists Help Inspire Students' Resilience

Adolescence is also a period of struggle for students, with heavy growth and academic pressures, and they are inevitably faced with various challenges, making them prone to timid, fearful, and self-abasing emotions. If these emotions cannot be overcome, they may lead to tension and fear, which are not conducive to individual growth. However, the life experiences of visual artists can awaken the emotional experiences of adolescent girls, allowing them to learn from painters and others, strive to improve, and grow their resilience to adversity.

For example, using "Sunflowers" as an introductory material, let children interpret the composition, lines, and colors of the work on their own, analyzing these vibrant colors and changing lines based on the basic theories of visual art creation and understanding Van Gogh's psychological state and emotions. Since girls are more sensitive and emotionally delicate, they can more easily read Van Gogh's tangled psychological state and the emotions of struggling with himself. Teachers then let students do a simple interpretation and analysis, followed by posing questions and leaving a blank period for reflection: Suppose you were Van Gogh, what emotions would you have after experiencing multiple career changes and extremities in life? If you were to create, how would you express your inner emotions through art? What kind of strength can you draw from the painting[3]? This allows students to let their feelings at this moment gradually settle down through reflection and time, further integrating into the atmosphere of the painting, and engaging in visual and emotional dialogue with the artist through the image. Then use Zhu Da's "Quail" and "Fish" for analysis, letting students analyze Zhu Da's attitude toward life's setbacks expressed in the paintings using the method of analyzing Van Gogh's works, followed by a thematic discussion. Finally, let student representatives speak, guiding them to compare their setbacks with those of Zhu Da and Van Gogh, and their attitudes towards setbacks with those of the authors, helping them realize that adopting a positive attitude towards life can change its direction.

3.4. Art Color Teaching Helps to Improve Students' Self-Awareness

"Who am I, where do I come from, where will I ultimately go?" These are questions that sensitive and contemplative adolescent girls often get immersed in. The unresolved nature of these questions can lead to further confusion in their studies and social interactions. Visual arts, through the introduction of color personality knowledge, can help resolve these confusions and enhance students' self-awareness.

For example, by comparing several paintings with different main colors and color schemes or sculptures adorned with different colors, students can start from the intuitive feelings that colors bring to them and discuss what the artwork might be trying to express and what it tells us. After the discussion, the teacher doesn't immediately provide answers but instead presents a color personality test. Students take the test based on their first impressions and feelings, forming an initial personality profile. Then, the teacher explains the principles of colors, such as how red can bring more joy or positive emotions, and that people with a red personality are positive, optimistic, and sociable. Green, on the other hand, can make people feel peaceful, which is why many prefer green wallpapers for their computer desktops; individuals with a green personality are friendly, inclusive, and adaptable. However, each type of personality has its shortcomings, as the saying goes, "every inch has its shortcoming and its advantage." Therefore, just like painting, one should set the right goals and reasonably match colors: in their own artwork, make their advantageous personality traits dominant; in collaborative works, complement each other's strengths to create a colorful outcome, recognizing each person's strengths and giving others the opportunity to showcase theirs.

3.5. Innovation and Design in Artwork Can Help Students Overcome Confusion

Adolescent girls often struggle with self-identity and confidence, particularly when faced with challenges in interpersonal relationships, leading to self-doubt and insecurity. Visual arts can play a significant role in helping students overcome confusion by encouraging them to break free from conventional thinking through innovation and design, thus opening their minds to new perspectives. By applying creative inspiration and results from one context to another, they can learn to view problems from different angles.

For example, in a packaging design activity, a teacher might introduce the task with images of animals that resonate emotionally with adolescent girls, immediately capturing their interest. The teacher could then pose questions such as, "Which animal do you like the most? Does it resemble you in any way? How can we use available materials to create a packaging box shaped like this animal?" This would spark

enthusiasm for discussion among the students. On one hand, students engage in an inner dialogue with the animal, experiencing a deep emotional connection. On the other hand, the activity provides topics for communication and interaction, leading to broader social engagement and breaking down existing interpersonal barriers.

The teacher can further enrich the activity by showing audio-visual materials of animals like gorillas, ostriches, cats, and sheep, and asking students which animal they feel most similar to and why. Students are then encouraged to design packaging boxes that reflect their unique personalities, followed by presenting their work and explaining their design choices. This not only enhances their creative skills but also develops their ability to express themselves confidently in front of others.

The teacher could then introduce a new challenge: "People are complex, and a single animal trait cannot fully represent us. Can we design an animal that combines traits from four different animals to represent the unique 'me'?" Students are randomly grouped to discuss and create their new projects. In the process of designing packaging boxes that are part lion, part rabbit, or a combination of other animals, students open up to themselves and others, recognizing their own qualities through the animal traits they choose. This collaborative activity also helps them make new friends while reinforcing their self-acceptance.

4. Strategies to Sustain the Role of Visual Arts in Constructing Self-Identity and Confidence in Adolescent Girls

4.1. Strengthen the Educational and Guiding Role of Different Art Elements

Since visual arts consist of multiple elements, to enhance their role in constructing self-identity and confidence in adolescent girls, it is necessary to narrow the focus and strengthen the educational and guiding role of different art elements.

For example, based on research theories that the human brain processes vision and touch separately, use metaphorical images to present the essence of value education. A one-minute public service announcement like "Washing Mother's Feet" can help students understand that filial piety is demonstrated through specific, everyday actions. Extending a single image to more scenes related to students' lives helps adolescent girls understand how intangible filial piety can be transformed into tangible acts. By making parent-child relationship issues concrete, students can more easily understand and practice filial piety in daily life. Alternatively, through the appreciation and practice of art-based images, girls at this stage can learn what true beauty is and how different forms of beauty can be used to create or change their lives. Materials like the "Mona Lisa" can be used to discuss standards of beauty, prompting students to think about sensory, emotional, and aesthetic capabilities; or through sand art creation, students can re-narrate the meaning of beauty [4].

4.2. Change the Form of Visual Art Activities According to Individual Characteristics

Adolescent girls have their overall personality traits, as well as distinct individual interests and personality differences, so it is necessary to focus on the role visual arts can play and change the form of visual activities.

For example, in a thematic teaching of art appreciation, girls who prefer independent thinking and are quieter can study independently, researching Van Gogh's life using a combination of classroom and extracurricular materials, and explaining their understanding of how Van Gogh became a great artist despite his struggles. More sociable and outgoing girls can form study groups, divide responsibilities for the same research topic, create a group report, and present their group work. After the activities, students should summarize their learning, not only evaluating the quality of their learning but also reflecting on the pros and cons of working alone versus in a group, trying to change themselves, seeking another learning method, and growing other learning qualities or social interaction skills. Teachers can also organize handwritten newspaper competitions, debate competitions, and in-school art practice competitions, where students choose their themes to create and display health knowledge handwritten newspapers, or debate the relative importance of inner versus outer beauty, using different visual art materials to gain learning nourishment [5].

4.3. Organically Combine Artistic Behavior with the Environment

To leverage the role of visual arts, Arnheim's theory of visual thinking and art therapy theories can be used to organically combine artistic behavior with the environment, creating themed environments or alleviating sudden conflicts.

For instance, different visual art materials that can be directly seen in real life can be brought into the classroom to decorate the environment, allowing the classroom's objective environment to influence students' psychological environments. This includes making more straightforward and passionate students relatively quieter and more stable under environmental influence, enabling them to listen to teachers' stories about artworks or artists' life experiences and generating new ideas or thoughts different from the past. Students' classroom performance can be observed, and when generative problems arise, they can be guided to use pre-prepared materials of different shapes, colors, and structures for artistic creation. During the creation of flat paintings, sculptures, and other design and production processes, artistic behavior can soothe inner anxiety, irritability, and oppositional emotions, and help express their viewpoints and attitudes through creation.

4.4. Exploring Art Therapy Methods Based on the Relationship between Art and Thought

Modern visual arts emphasize the expression and release of personal emotions through artistic means, stemming from the mutually influential and supportive relationship between art and thought. For instance, imagery can embody subjective emotions, while thought often requires artistic forms for expression. Therefore, art therapy can be used to harness the positive impact of visual arts on the self-identity and confidence of adolescent girls.

This form of therapy can be categorized into several types, such as Gestalt therapy, humanistic-integrative art therapy, and group interactive art therapy. For example, based on Arnheim's psychological theory of visual thinking, students can be guided to release the emotions associated with adolescence. Teachers can encourage students to freely express their inner emotions through graffiti, allowing them to vent their pain, anger, or confusion and objectively present topics like self-denial. During this process, students can capture fleeting thoughts and externalize them, leading to a unique experience of relief, as if they've exhaled a burden.

Subsequently, the teacher and student can analyze the significance of the symbols in their artwork, such as lines, colors, and composition, sensitively uncovering aspects of the self that had previously been hidden. By evaluating themselves from an artistic worldview, students can engage in an equal dialogue with their inner selves through the emotional symbols projected in their art. The teacher can then encourage students to use art to seek a joyful life, further achieving the goals of art therapy.

5. Conclusion

The role of visual arts in constructing self-identity and cultivating confidence in adolescent girls stems from the principles and connotations of art and manifests at different levels. Teachers should innovate art activities and highlight art elements based on children's physical and mental growth patterns and the characteristics of visual arts. This not only helps children correctly understand the "problems" of physical and psychological growth during adolescence but also allows them to find ways to solve these "problems" and re-recognize themselves through artistic media.

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